

THE ENTOMOLOGY OF MARTIN LISTER,
PHYSICIAN, NATURALIST AND
ANTIQUARIAN

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Toward the close of the seventeenth century, when Dr. Martin Lister was practicing in London, and while he was a member of the Royal College of Physicians, Ned Ward, in his *London Spy*, was picturesquely describing the college, its members and their privileges. He said in part six of his then popular publication, "No Person, tho' a Graduate in Physick of *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, and a Man of more *Learning, Judgment* and *Experience* than one half of their *Members*, shall have the Liberty of Practicing in, or within Seven Miles of *London*, without *License* under the *College Seal*; or in any other part of *England*, if they have not taken some Degree at one of the *Universities*; they have also Power to Administer an *Oath*, which they know by Experience, is as Practicable to be broke the next Day, as 'tis to be taken; they can likewise *Fine* and *Imprison Offenders*, in the Science of *Physick*, and all such who presume to Cure a *Patient* when they have given 'em over, tho' by more Excellent Methods than ever were known to their Ignorance: They have also the Priviledge of making *By-Laws*, for the Interest of themselves, and Injury of the Publick, . . . they have Authority to Examine the Medicines in all *Apothecaries Shops*, to Judge of the *Wholesomeness* and *Goodness* of many *Drugs* and *Compositions* they never yet understood; they are likewise Exempt from Troublesome Offices, as *Jury-Men*, *Constables*, &c., being nowadays oblig'd to keep *Watch* or *Ward*, except with a *Rich Patient*, where they are assur'd to be well paid for their Labour; they have also the Liberty to Kill as many as they please, provided they do it *Secundum Artem*, and no *Law* shall call them to an Account. They are freed from the bearing of *Arms*, or providing of *Ammunition*, except *Pill*, *Bolus*, or *Potion*, or such as destroy the

Bodies of *Sick Persons* they know not how to Cure: . . . They rail mightily in their Writings against the Ignorance of *Quacks* and *Mountebanks*, yet for the sake of Lucre, they License all the Cozening Pretenders about Town, or they could not Practice; which shews it is by their Toleration that the People are Cheated out of their Lives and Money; and yet they think themselves so Honest, as to be no way answerable for this Publick Injury; as if they could not kill People fast enough themselves, but must Depute all the *Physical Knaves* in the Town to be Death's Journeymen. Thus do they License, what they ought carefully to Suppress; and Practice themselves, what they Blame and Condemn in others."

Of course the Royal College of Physicians did not deign to notice Ned Ward and conservative Doctor Lister would have been the last to admit that there was a grain of truth in Ward's writings. Were he alive today, it is doubtful if he would approve, even as an antiquarian, the use of Ward's statements to indicate London medical manners at the end of the seventeenth century.

At this time Lister was a successful physician of the *beau monde*, critical of the work of Ruysch and Sydenham and preferring the older views. In 1709 he was appointed second physician in ordinary to Queen Anne and before this he had been one of the fourteen doctors who officiated at the last illness of King Charles II, during which the poor man was bled, blistered and scarified and subjected to emetics, purgatives and elysters. Elias Ashmole in his "Diary" records first seeing Doctor Lister at a dinner at the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury on September 23, 1683, and more than a year later or on December 19, 1684, the entry reads, "Dr. Chamberlain proposed to me to bring Dr. Lister to my wife, that he might undertake her," and on December 22, 1684, "They both came to my house and Dr. Lister did undertake her."

Lister was born about 1638, the son of Sir Martin Lister. Entering St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1655, he graduated B.A. in 1658-9, and M.A. in 1662. It is supposed that Ray, who taught at Cambridge at this time, was instrumental in interesting Lister in natural history. He was quite friendly with Ray,

traveling through France with him on his way to Montpellier to study medicine and writing numerous letters to him, dealing with observations on shells, plants and spiders.

In 1670, he was settled at York, practicing medicine, and in the same year he became a fellow of the Royal Society. The study of natural history and Yorkshire antiquities occupied his spare time, and the Ashmolean Museum later benefited by this, when he presented it with his collection of shells, original drawings, and Roman antiquities found in England. His forty some contributions to the *Philosophical Transactions* cover meteorology, medicine, molluscs, insects and antiquities. Besides, to mention only part of his activities, he translated "J. Goedartius of Insects," added notes and printed it at his own expense in 1682; he wrote "Historia Animalium Angliæ" (London, 1678-81), "Exercitationes octo Medicinales" (London, 1679), "A Journey to Paris in 1698" (London, 1698) and printed an annotated edition of "De Opsoniis et Condimentis, sive Arte Coquinaria" in 1705. His most important work, however, was "Historia sive Synopsis Methodica Conchyliorum" (London, 1685-92), three volumes, with figures of all the shells then known, made by his daughters Mary and Susannah.

Lister, although somewhat of a speculatist, made many accurate observations in natural history. He did not believe with Goedart that "an animal may be generated of a fat juice," and held to "animal parents" as the true cause. He observed the habits of gossamer spiders, the blistering effects of caterpillar hairs, etc. His range of observations is indicated by the following titles from the *Philosophical Transactions*, 1670 to 1684.

Vol. 5, No. 68, p. 2067.

"Extract of a Letter written by Mr. Martin Lister to the Publisher, Januar. 25, 16⁷⁰/₇₁, relating partly to the same Argument with that of the former Letter, and directing to another Insect, that is like to yield an Acid liquor; partly to the Bleeding of the Sycamore."

Vol. 6, No. 71, pp. 2165-2166.

"An Observation concerning certain Insect husks of the Kermes kind communicated by Mr. Lister, May 22, 1671. which came to hand since the Printing of the former sheets."

Vol. 6, No. 72, pp. 2170-2171.

“A Letter written to the Publisher from York, Jan. 10, 1670, concerning a kind of Fly that is Viviparous, together with a Set of ‘curious Inquiries about Spiders,’ and a Table of the several sorts of them to be found in England, amounting to at least 33. By Mr. Martyn Lister.”

Vol. 6, No. 72, pp. 2176-2177.

“An Extract of a Letter from the same hand, May 30, 1671; concerning an Insect feeding upon Henbain, the horrid smell of which is in that creature so qualified thereby, as to become in some measure Aromatical; together with the colour yielded by the Eggs of the same, &c.”

Vol. 6, No. 73, pp. 2196-2197.

This refers to a “kind of Insect, hatched of the English Kermes,” formerly noticed and described in No. 71, p. 2164.

Vol. 6, No. 75, pp. 2254-2257.

“A Considerable Accompt touching Vegetable Excrencencies, given by that Learned and Observing Gentleman, Mr. Martin Lister, in a Letter to the Publisher, of July 17, 1671, from York.”

Vol. 6, No. 76, pp. 2284-2285.

“Another Letter, written of the same Gentleman, from York Sept. 13. 1671. enlarging his former Communications in Numb. 75. about Vegetable Exerescencies, and Ichneumon-Worms.”

Vol. 6, No. 77, pp. 3002-3005.

“Some Additions of Mr. Lyster to his former Communications about Vegetable Excrencencies, and Ichneumon Wasps; together with an Inquiry concerning Tarantula’s, and a Discovery of another Musk-sented Insect; transmitted to the Publisher from York in two letters, of Octob. 16. and 28. 1671.”

Vol. 6, No. 76, pp. 2281-2282.

“A Letter of Mr. Martin Lister, written at York August 25, 1671. confirming the Observation in No. 74. about Musk sented Insects; adding some notes upon D. Swammerdam’s book of Insects, and on that of M. Steno concerning Petrify’d Shells.”

Vol. 7, No. 87, pp. 5059-5060.

“An Extract of a Letter of Mr. Lister to the Publisher, both enlarging and correcting his former Notes about Kermes; and withal insinuating his conjecture of Cochineil's being a sort of Kermes.”

Vol. 14, No. 160, pp. 592-596.

“A Letter formerly written to Mr. H. O. containing the Projection of the Threads of Spiders, and Bees breeding in cases made of Leaves, as also, a Viviparous Fly, &c. by Dr. M. Lister.”

After Lister moved to London in 1684, his professional duties occupied his time to the exclusion of natural history. In that year he was created M.D. by the University of Oxford. In 1687, he was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and in 1694, a censor. His “Journey to Paris” was the result of his attachment in 1698 to the Earl of Portland's embassy to the French court. He remained only six months, but during that time made notes on everything he saw, and upon his return to London, these were published. In this account Lister is not concerned with reporting affairs of state, court ceremonies and the like, but devotes himself, in more or less detail, to descriptions of the houses, pavements, gardens, coaches, inhabitants of the streets, the diet of the Parisians, street lights, statues, paintings, contents of museums, collections of private individuals, dissecting rooms, operations, early manuscripts, medals, books, the king's library, libraries of various convents, pottery, vegetables, wines, water, the operas, comedies, gambling, knavery, plants, flowers, trees, the air of Paris, quarries, the diseases of the people, the apothecaries' shops and the tendency of barbers, women, apothecaries and monks to try their hand at curing the pox. Paris of course was well known to Londoners, and Lister's attention to trivial details induced Dr. William King to ridicule it in the “Journey to London.” This circulated as a chap-book (probably an abbreviated account) under the title “A journey to London in the year 1698; after the ingenious method of that made by Dr. Martin Lyster to Paris in the same year, &c. Written originally in French by Monsieur Sorbriere and newly trans-

lated into English," (London, 1699). Doctor Lister died at Epsom on February 2, 1712.

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PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS, 1670 to 1684.

**EURYMUS EURYTHEME F. AMPHIDUSA F. ♀
PALLIDA COCKERELL**

One fresh specimen of this form, together with a number of typical *amphidusa* Boisduval (males and females) were captured by Mr. L. A. Tomka and the writer on October 6, 1927, at Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, New York.

A second fresh specimen of *pallida* and three females of *amphidusa* were captured by the writer on August 24, 1928, at Long Beach, Long Island, New York. All four individuals were apparently ovipositing on red clover.

The form *pallida* Cockerell has not appeared in any of our local lists, or in either the New York or New Jersey State lists.—
FRANK E. WATSON.